

# Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

## *A Prayer*

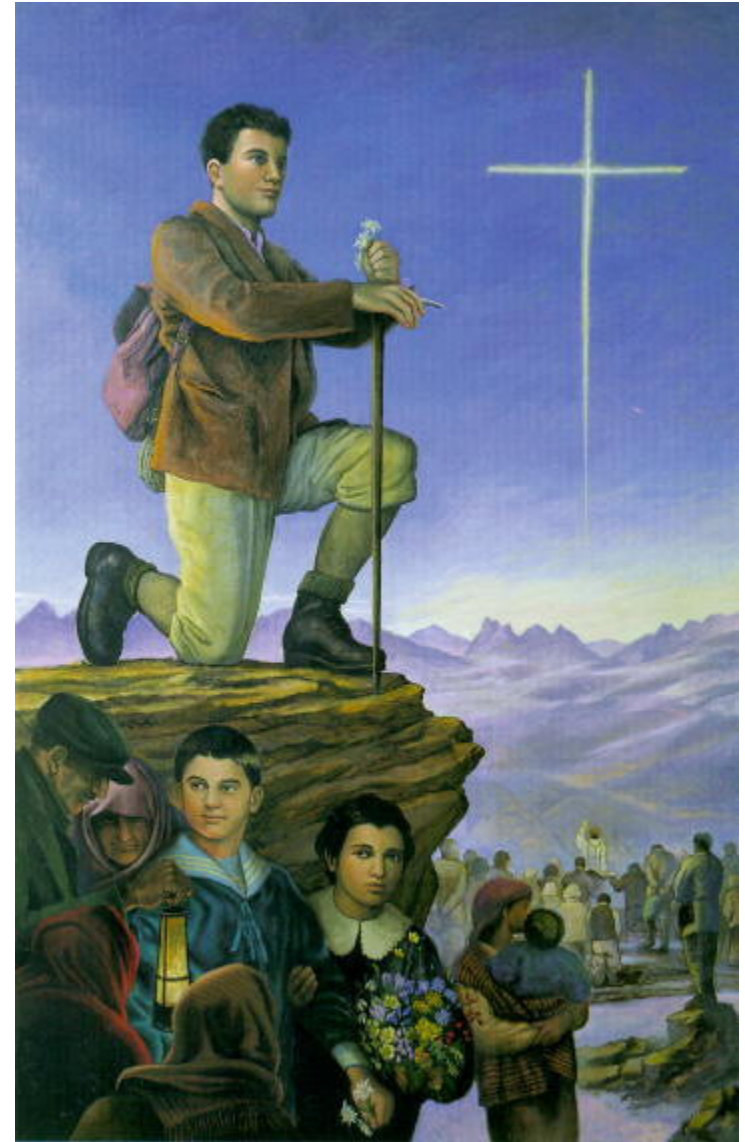
“Father, you gave to the young Pier Giorgio Frassati the joy of meeting Christ and of living his faith in service of the poor and the sick. Through his intercession may we, too, walk the path of the beatitudes and follow the example of his generosity, spreading the spirit of the Gospel in society. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

- Giovanni Cardinal Saldarini, Archbishop of Turin

## *A Quote*

“To live without faith, without a patrimony to defend, without a steady struggle for truth, that is not living, but existing.”

- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati



Patron Saint of World Youth Day

Feast Day on July 4<sup>th</sup>

Pier was born in Turin, Italy, on Holy Saturday, April 6, 1901. His mother was a painter, and his father was the founder of a popular newspaper as well as an important political figure in Italy. His father was also an agnostic, which means he was not certain about God's existence. Pier, however, was very faithful to God and he spent his entire life helping the poor and needy.

Jesus told His disciples that offering service and help to others was like offering it directly to Him (Matthew 25:40). Pier took these words to heart and he dedicated his life to serving those in need. Often Pier would give his allowance to the poor instead of spending it on himself; he would even give away his train fare and then run home as quickly as he could to avoid punishment for being late. One terribly cold night Pier gave his own coat to a poor old man on the street. When his father scolded him for doing so, he simply replied, "But you see, papa, it was cold."

At the young age of 17 he joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society to help care for the sick, the needy, and the soldiers returning from WWI. He often skipped family vacations at the summer home in order to continue caring for the poor. After completing high school Pier decided to study to be a mining engineer, not because he liked mining all that much, but because he thought he could "serve Christ better among the miners."

In addition to helping poor and needy individuals, Pier worked to reform society in general. He said, "Charity is not enough: we need social reform." In 1919 Pier joined the Catholic Student Federation and the Popular Party, a political organization that promoted the Catholic Church's social teachings. He also helped establish a Catholic daily newspaper.

Inspired by the Dominican preacher and reformer of Florence, Girolamo Savonarola, and by St. Catherine of Siena, Pier became a member of the Third Order of St. Dominic in 1922. At this time in Italy a dangerous political ideology called fascism was growing in influence; Pier actively resisted this movement. At one Church-organized

rally the police began treating the demonstrators violently. When Pier saw his group's banner fall to the ground, he quickly snatched it and held it up high for all to see.

Probably as a result of his care for the sick, Blessed Pier contracted polio. He was tending to his dying grandmother and neglecting his own health when his illness worsened. After six days of extreme suffering he died on July 4, 1925, at the young age of 24. His funeral brought the city together. Many elite and wealthy people attended because Pier's family was well-respected; however, thousands of poor and needy came to mourn the loss of Pier because he had unselfishly cared for them.

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati lived his short life to the fullest. He loved outdoor activities, especially skiing and mountain climbing. He was a practical jokester, and even formed a group with his friends teasingly called "The Shady Characters." He loved art and music, often went to theaters, operas, and museums, and he could quote large portions of Dante by heart. He centered his life on his love for Jesus. He received Communion daily, which was rare at this time in history; he also prayed the rosary and often spent hours during the night on his knees in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Pope John Paul II prayed at Pier's tomb in 1989 and on May 20, 1990, he beatified Pier. At the beatification ceremony the Pope spoke of Pier's great love for God and the poor and asked, "Is it perhaps not true that the only thing that lasts, without ever losing its validity, is the fact that a person 'has loved'?" Pier is invoked as the patron of World Youth Day, and because he was a student he is also frequently invoked as the patron of students.

#### **Goal for the month:**

Go to Eucharistic Adoration to spend some time praying to our Lord. This Lenten season do something to help the sick and needy around you. For example, participate in Operation Rice Bowl by donating money to and offering prayers for those in need.